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ABSTRACT

In her book "Building Better Boards," Sister Lourdes Sheehan listed eight reasons for establishing and fostering Catholic education boards. This paper presents findings of a study that gathered information about boards in different types of Catholic elementary and secondary schools. A national survey of almost 1,400 Catholic schools received 806 completed questionnaires, most of which (92 percent) were completed by principals. Respondents assigned a grade of "A" to 25 percent of the boards and a "B" to 44 percent. Boards spent the majority of their time on the following issues--budget and finance, development and funding, planning, policy, and marketing/public relations/recruitment. Their five most important accomplishments were reported to be development and fund raising, financial stability, long-range planning, building upgrade, and marketing/public relations/recruitment. Effective boards took ownership of issues, developed and defended policy, offered financial advice, enabled strategic planning, and served as a good public-relations resource. Boards provided an opportunity to involve the laity, particularly parents of children in Catholic schools. It is recommended that boards and other governance structures help principals achieve the levels of spiritual, educational, and managerial leadership expected of a Catholic school administrator. Fourteen tables are included. (LMI)

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A Profile of Catholic School Boards: Results from the NABE Survey

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In her seminal work, *Building Better Boards*[1], Sister Lourdes Sheehan lists eight reasons for establishing and fostering Catholic education boards: 1) to promote the concept of lay ministry; 2) to develop ownership and stability for the future; 3) to offer financial advice; 4) to develop and defend policy; 5) to serve as a good public relations source; 6) to enable the principal to spend adequate time as an educational leader; 7) to provide parents/guardians with a voice in the children's education; and 8) to encourage strategic planning. Until recently, little was known on a national level regarding how well boards of education or similar governance bodies in Catholic schools are realizing the objectives outlined by Sheehan.

In January, 1994 the National Association of Boards of Catholic Education (NABE), a division of NCEA, sent a survey concerning governance boards to a sample of nearly 1400 elementary and secondary schools nationwide. The survey had three basic purposes. The first purpose was to gather information about the characteristics of boards in different types of Catholic elementary and secondary schools: parish, interparish, diocesan, regional and private or independent schools. The main characteristics of interest were the types of board and their models of governance; the membership of boards; their committee structures; and their meetings and decision-making modalities. The second purpose was to describe the boards's responsibilities and activities, including the training they receive; their communication with their constituents; their major responsibilities; the issues that consumed most of their time; and their main achievements and the factors that led to these achievements. The third purpose of the survey was to determine the factors that best discriminate between more effective and less effective boards, as well as to identify those factors that prevent boards from being effective.

From the initial mailing, 758 schools, approximately 55 percent of the schools sampled, returned a completed survey. An additional 48 surveys, 31 from the participants at the Principal's Academy during the summer of 1994 and 17 from a workshop in Texas, brought the final number of completed surveys to 806.

Characteristics of the Sample

School Type

Completed surveys were received from 571 elementary schools and 196 secondary schools (see Table 1). In addition, 26 surveys came from PK-12 schools, 4 from junior high schools, 3 from middle schools and 3 from PK/K schools. Three surveys did not contain school identification.

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[1]Sheehan, L. (1990). *Building Better Boards*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

Based on the profile of Catholic schools nationally as reported by Brigham[2], diocesan, regional and interparish schools are slightly overrepresented in the sample, while parish and private schools are slightly underrepresented. For example, 20 percent of the elementary schools and 54 percent of the secondary schools in the sample are diocesan, regional or interparish schools, compared with the national figures of 13 percent for elementary schools and 48 percent for secondary schools. Parish schools account for 78 percent of the elementary schools in the sample, compared with 84 percent nationally. Private schools comprise 39 percent of the secondary schools in the sample, compared with 41 percent nationally.

Table 1
Classification of Schools Returning a Survey

School Type	Parish	Inter-Parish	Diocesan Regional	Private	Unknown	Total
Elementary	445	18	97	9	2	571
Middle	1		2			3
PK-12	6	4	7	8	1	26
Secondary	15	16	89	76		196
Junior High	1		3			4
PK/K				1	2	3
Unknown				1	2	3
Total	**468**	**38**	**198**	**95**	**7**	**806**

Ninety-four percent of the schools indicated they had a board or some governance structure. Nationally, approximately 77 percent of Catholic schools have boards, as estimated from the data reported by Brigham (1994) in his annual statistical publication. So, the schools that completed a survey were somewhat more likely than those that did not return a survey to have boards or some governance structure.

Geographical Representativeness

The sample appears to be geographically representative of Catholic schools nationwide. After accounting for the higher likelihood of receiving a response from

[2]Brigham, F. H. (1994). *United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 1993-1994.* Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association.

a school with a governing board, the relative proportion of schools with boards that returned a survey in each of NABE's geographic regions closely matches the national distribution. For example, the Mideast region, which has the lowest proportion of schools with boards nationally, just over 50 percent, also has the lowest proportion of schools with boards in this sample, 77 percent. The remaining proportions of schools with boards in the other regions range from 81 percent to 94 percent, while the remaining proportions in the sample range from 91 percent to over 98 percent.

Respondents

The vast majority of the surveys, 741 or 92 percent, were completed by principals. Thirty-eight surveys were completed by presidents of schools, three by pastors, six by board chairs, and 14 by others. Four surveys did not contain information concerning the compiler's position.

Characteristics of Boards

For the purposes of analysis, schools in the sample were divided into four types: parish elementary schools; diocesan, regional and interparish elementary schools; private or independent secondary schools; and diocesan, regional and interparish secondary schools. What are the structural characteristics of the boards in the sample?

Board Structure

The vast majority of the respondents indicated that the school is required to have a board by the diocese, parish or religious community that owns it. Over 85 percent of the elementary school boards, 81 percent of diocesan, regional and interparish secondary boards, and 63 percent of private secondary school boards exist because of diocesan or school requirements.

Most respondents indicated that the school board is either advisory (43 percent) or consultative (35 percent), rather than one with limited jurisdiction (20 percent) or a board of trustees (2 percent). Boards with limited jurisdiction or boards of trustees are more likely found in secondary schools than in elementary schools and in private schools more than in parish, diocesan, regional or interparish schools. Almost 60 percent of private secondary schools and 33 percent of diocesan, regional or interparish secondary schools report having boards with limited jurisdiction or boards of trustees.

Most governance bodies are called boards, rather than commissions, councils or committees. Eighty-one percent of elementary schools reporting some governance structure have boards, 11 percent have commissions and eight percent have another structure, such as a committee, council or parent group. Educational commissions are

more likely to occur in elementary schools, especially those associated with parishes, than in secondary schools. Most governance structures in secondary schools are boards (93 percent); only three percent are commissions and five percent are other structures.

Time in Existence

Approximately 65 percent of the boards have been in existence for at least 10 years. Boards established within the past four years are more likely found in diocesan, regional and interparish schools than in parish or private schools (see Table 2).

Table 2
Length of Time Boards in Existence

Existence	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
4 Years or Less	13.5%	21.9%	15.9%	24.8%
4 to 9 Years	20.7%	15.2%	17.4%	19.2%
10 Years or More	65.8%	62.9%	66.7%	56.0%

Board Size

Secondary school boards, especially those from private schools, are larger than elementary school boards and have more members from religious communities. The average board size for parish elementary schools is 9 members; for diocesan, regional or interparish elementary schools, 11 members; for diocesan, regional or interparish secondary schools, 14 members; and for private secondary schools, 15 members.

Board Membership

Parents, pastors, and parishioners are more likely to be members of elementary school boards than secondary school boards, while alumni and members of the business community are more likely to be members of secondary school boards than elementary school boards (see Table 3). Parents are members of over 89 percent of parish elementary school boards and pastors are members of over 85 percent of them. About two-thirds of parish boards have parishioners as members and less than half them have educators. Less than a fourth of parish boards have business people and alumni as members. The membership profile of interparish, regional and diocesan elementary school boards is similar to that of parish elementary school boards.

Over 85 percent of private secondary school boards have business people and alumni as members, over 76 percent of them have educators as members, and over 66 percent of them have parents as members. The likelihood of membership of different groups on diocesan, regional or interparish secondary schools boards is more uniformly distributed, with parents being most probable of membership and parishioners being least probable.

Table 3
Membership of Boards

Members	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Parents	89.4%	88.1%	66.2%	79.4%
Pastors	85.4%	85.3%	19.7%	53.9%
Parishioners	65.3%	57.8%	5.6%	32.4%
Educators	44.8%	47.7%	76.1%	56.9%
Business Community	22.0%	28.4%	87.3%	60.8%
Alumni	17.3%	22.0%	85.9%	64.7%

Meetings

Monthly board meetings are more likely to occur among boards associated with parishes and diocesan schools than among private schools. Approximately 85 percent of parish, diocesan, regional and interparish elementary schools and 63 percent of parish-related secondary schools had monthly meetings, compared with approximately 25 percent of private secondary schools. Private schools are most likely to hold quarterly meetings.

Committee Structure

A finance committee is the most common committee for boards of all types of schools, followed by a nominating committee, a development committee and a marketing committee (see Table 4). Boards of secondary schools are more likely than boards of elementary schools to have finance and nominating committees and much more likely to have development, facility, and executive committees. Boards generally are least likely to have legal and personnel committees. About 10 percent of elementary school boards and 6 percent of secondary school boards do not have any committees.

Table 4
Committee Structure of Boards

Mode	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Finance	70.8%	75.2%	84.5%	85.3%
Nominating	52.2%	47.7%	71.8%	56.9%
Policy	45.3%	40.4%	29.6%	40.2%
Marketing	45.3%	46.8%	43.7%	51.0%
Development	46.5%	48.6%	71.8%	59.8%
Facility	39.4%	40.4%	62.0%	62.7%
Executive	28.5%	36.7%	83.1%	52.9%
Financial Aid	25.2%	33.9%	19.7%	33.3%
Legal	11.4%	14.7%	18.3%	16.7%
Personnel	10.9%	13.8%	25.4%	17.6%
No Committees	10.1%	10.1%	5.6%	5.9%

Activities and Responsibilities of Boards

Decision-Making Modality

Boards associated with elementary schools are slightly more likely to arrive at decisions through consensus, while those associated with secondary schools are much more likely to employ voting as a means of making decisions (see Table 5).

Table 5
Decision-Making Modality of Boards

Mode	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Voting	37.9%	33.0%	47.9%	49.1%
Consensus	42.6%	38.5%	31.0%	29.3%
Combination	12.4%	16.5%	14.1%	13.8%

Accountability

Private secondary school boards are more likely than other boards to perceive they are accountable to religious communities and owners, and less likely to perceive an accountability to the bishop, the superintendent, pastors, and the school administrator (see Table 6). Parish elementary school boards are less likely to report they are accountable to the superintendent than are diocesan, regional and interparish schools. Boards from elementary schools, especially parish schools, are more likely than boards from secondary schools to be accountable to pastors.

Table 6
Perceived Objects of Board's Accountability

Accountability	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Bishop	6.9%	13.8%	1.4%	30.1%
Religious Community	0.2%	1.8%	63.4%	5.3%
Superintendent	10.9%	20.2%	2.8%	23.9%
Pastor	83.2%	63.3%	0.0%	13.3%
Administrator	41.6%	37.6%	7.0%	31.0%
Owners	0.0%	3.7%	18.3%	3.5%
Other	4.2%	6.4%	12.7%	4.4%

Areas of Responsibility

The vast majority of all boards are involved with issues pertaining to budget, policy, mission and philosophy, and planning (see Table 7). When all elementary school boards are considered, only small differences occur between boards in parish schools and those in interparish, diocesan and regional schools concerning their areas of responsibility, with the latter being more involved with marketing and public relations, the evaluation of the administrator and legal matters.

Secondary school boards are much more likely than elementary school boards to be involved with planning, marketing and public relations, development, facilities, and legal matters. Private secondary school boards are much more likely than other boards to be involved with development, enrollment issues, selection of the administrator, evaluation of the administrator, expansions and closings, curriculum and legal matters.

Table 7
Percentage of Boards with Specific Responsibilities

Area	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Budget	86.6%	87.2%	95.8%	93.1%
Policy	85.4%	86.2%	85.9%	82.4%
Mission/Philosophy	80.7%	78.0%	88.7%	86.3%
Planning	77.5%	75.2%	88.7%	87.3%
Nominate New Members	74.3%	71.6%	83.1%	71.6%
Marketing/PR	68.1%	75.2%	81.7%	81.4%
Funding	65.6%	74.3%	81.7%	79.4%
Development	63.6%	66.1%	90.1%	82.4%
Facilities	62.4%	65.1%	81.7%	80.4%
Enrollment	59.9%	63.3%	80.3%	67.6%
Administrator Selection	59.4%	64.2%	78.9%	59.8%
Recruitment	58.4%	63.3%	76.1%	71.6%
Administrator Evaluation	49.5%	62.4%	76.1%	64.7%
Curriculum	49.5%	48.6%	66.2%	54.9%
Expansion/Closings	48.5%	50.5%	62.0%	54.9%
Legal Matters	32.7%	43.1%	74.6%	60.8%

Communication with Constituencies

Table 8 shows the percentage of boards that both have contact with various groups and good or excellent communication with them. The numbers in the table are conservative values that are obtained by multiplying the percentage of contacts with a group by the percentage of ratings that are good or excellent. Low numbers in the table reflect either a low level of contact with a group, poor communication or both.

Boards from elementary schools and those from diocesan, regional and interparish secondary schools show a similar patters of contact and communication with various groups, with the highest levels being with parishes, faculty, parents, and parent groups. In general, substantially less contact occurs with religious education boards, total education boards, diocesan boards of education, and religious communities. The pattern of contact and communication of private secondary school boards is somewhat different than that of other boards in many areas. Private boards show

substantially higher levels of contact and communication with religious communities, but substantially lower levels with parishes, parish pastoral council, parents, parent groups, the Diocesan Education Office, and the Diocesan Board of Education.

Table 8
Percentage of Boards with Contact and Good Communication with Various Groups

Area	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Business Community	34.6%	45.9%	57.8%	53.0%
Local Community	49.7%	56.8%	54.9%	58.8%
Religious Community	25.5%	35.8%	87.3%	33.3%
Parishes	64.9%	72.5%	28.2%	60.7%
Parish Pastoral Council	60.6%	62.4%	7.0%	39.3%
Finance Council	46.9%	54.2%	49.3%	63.7%
Faculty	67.8%	70.6%	60.5%	61.8%
Parents	70.0%	71.5%	43.7%	66.7%
Parent Groups	64.4%	60.6%	35.2%	61.8%
Students	39.6%	39.5%	28.2%	35.3%
Diocesan Ed Office	45.8%	49.6%	19.7%	59.8%
Diocesan Board Ed	25.0%	35.8%	8.5%	41.2%
Total Education Board	26.0%	24.8%	14.6%	10.9%
Religious Ed Board	25.2%	28.0%	11.3%	23.5%

Goals and Evaluation

Between two-thirds and three-fourths of boards report they develop goals and most of these do so annually (see Table 9). Overall, between 50 and 60 percent of boards develop annual goals. Private secondary school boards are more likely than boards associated with other schools to be evaluated and to evaluate themselves in the light of their goals. About a half of private school boards assess their effectiveness periodically, compared with about a third of other boards.

Table 9
Percentage of Boards that Develop Goals and Receive Assessment

Activity	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Develops Goals	73.0%	66.1%	74.6%	69.0%
Annual Goals	59.9%	50.5%	60.6%	56.0%
Board Assessment	33.2%	33.0%	49.3%	30.2%
Board Evaluates Self in Light of Goals	34.2%	30.3%	43.7%	29.3%

Majority of Time Spent by Boards

The five issues mentioned most frequently as consuming the greatest amount of board time are: budget & finance; development & funding; planning; policy; and a combination of marketing, public relations and recruitment (see Table 10). Boards are most likely to report spending the most time on budget and finance issues than on other issues. Over 50 percent of the secondary school boards and between 34 and 44 percent of the elementary school boards reported spending the most time on budget and finance.

Maintenance is listed more frequently as an issue by boards from secondary schools than by boards from elementary schools, while policy is listed more frequently by boards from elementary schools.

Marketing, public relations and recruitment are included more often among the issues receiving the most board time by boards associated with parish elementary schools and private secondary schools than by boards associated with diocesan, interparish or regional schools, both elementary and secondary.

Table 10
Percentage of Boards Spending Time in Various Areas

Activity	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Most Time Spent				
Budget/Finance	34.9%	44.0%	54.9%	55.8%
Planning	17.8%	11.0%	12.7%	7.1%
Policy	14.1%	12.8%	1.4%	6.2%
Development/Funding	9.7%	12.8%	11.2%	10.6%
Market/PR/Recruit	4.4%	4.6%	2.8%	2.7%
Maintenance	1.7%	0.9%	1.4%	1.8%
Mission/Philosophy	2.7%	2.8%	4.2%	1.8%
Curricular/Programs	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Three Areas Most Involved With				
Budget/Finance	56.2%	66.1%	77.5%	74.3%
Planning	38.9%	35.8%	32.4%	37.2%
Policy	42.8%	42.2%	15.5%	29.2%
Development/Funding	42.6%	45.0%	50.7%	55.8%
Market/PR/Recruit	27.7%	33.0%	35.2%	25.7%
Maintenance	15.3%	12.8%	25.3%	19.5%
Mission/Philosophy	5.0%	4.6%	5.6%	7.1%
Curricular/Programs	7.2%	9.2%	4.2%	5.3%

Main Achievements

Five achievements are among those listed most frequently by boards as being their most important accomplishment: development & fundraising; budget & financial stability; long-range planning; plant upgrade or expansion; and a combination of marketing, public relations, and recruitment (see Table 11). Boards from secondary schools are more likely than boards from elementary schools to list budget/financial stability as a main achievement. Private secondary school boards are more likely than boards from other types of schools to list development/fundraising, long-range planning, and plant upgrade/expansion as main achievements

Table 11
Percentage of Boards Listing Specific Main Achievements

Achievement	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Development/Fundraising	15.3%	12.8%	22.6%	9.7%
Financial Stability/Budget	13.9%	14.7%	25.4%	25.7%
Long-Range Planning	11.9%	11.9%	23.9%	10.6%
Plant Upgrade/Expansion	11.6%	7.3%	14.1%	8.0%
Marketing/PR/Recruitment	11.4%	7.3%	8.5%	10.6%
Tuition Policy Changes	6.9%	0.9%	0.0%	6.2%
Teacher Salaries	5.7%	0.9%	1.4%	4.4%
Curricular Update/Evaluation	4.0%	2.8%	0.0%	1.8%
Policy Development	4.2%	0.9%	1.4%	4.4%
No Achievement Listed	18.8%	14.7%	11.3%	13.3%

Factors Leading to Achievement

The major factors identified by boards as contributing to their achievements are dedication, commitment, desire and response to needs (see Table 12). A significant number of boards also list leadership as a factor. Other factors listed less frequently include expertise, planning and a combination of consensus, vision and openness.

Table 12
Percentage of Boards Identifying Factors Leading to Main Achievements

Achievement	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Dedication/Commitment	24.0%	18.3%	31.0%	16.8%
Needs/Desire	21.8%	21.1%	19.7%	22.1%
Leadership	16.3%	13.8%	16.9%	16.8%
Expertise	10.6%	3.7%	16.9%	7.1%
Planning	6.4%	4.6%	5.6%	8.0%
Consensus/Vision/Openness	5.0%	4.6%	4.2%	6.2%

Training

Training of board members is more likely to occur in boards associated with elementary schools than in boards associated with secondary schools. Approximately 75 percent of boards in elementary schools and slightly more than 40 percent of boards in secondary schools report that they receive some periodic training. Most of the training occurs at least on an annual basis. All boards are somewhat more likely to provide training to new members than they are to provide periodic training to the entire board.

Training for the vast majority of boards (virtually all of those associated with elementary schools and almost 90 percent of those associated with secondary schools) covers issues involving board roles and responsibilities. The training for fewer than half the boards, however, deals with relationships with other groups with which the board interacts. Clarification of policy making versus administration is more of an issue with parish, interparish, diocesan and regional schools than with private schools.

Most training of parish, interparish, diocesan and regional school boards is conducted by the diocesan leader, while most training of private schools boards is conducted by a consultant, except for new members who are trained either by the chief administrator of the school or by the board itself.

Perceived Board Effectiveness

Measure of Perceived Effectiveness

In order to obtain a measure of the board's effectiveness, the respondents were asked to assign the board a letter grade between A and F. Twenty-five percent of all boards received an A, 44 percent received a B, 18 percent received a C and six percent received a D or an F. Another six percent of respondents did not assigned a grade to the board. Respondents from private secondary schools were more likely than respondents from other schools to assign their boards A grades.

Correlates of Perceived Board Effectiveness

What are the factors that are strongly related to the perceived effectiveness of the board? Among all types of boards, three factors consistently emerged as important correlates of effectiveness (see Table 13). The degree to which the board assumes ownership of its issues and the board's communication with various constituencies consistently have the highest relationships with perceived board effectiveness for boards from all types of schools. The perception that the board has effective committees is also an important correlate of perceived overall effectiveness of the board, more so for boards from parish, interparish, regional or diocesan schools than

for boards from private secondary schools.

Table 13
Major Correlates of Perceived Board Effectiveness

Variable	Parish Elementary	Interparish Regional Diocesan Elementary	Private Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Degree of ownership	.573	.568	.461	.534
Effective committees	.521	.562	.298	.404
Communication (composite)	.552	.513	.551	.455
Communication with:				
Parishes	.462	.496		.281
Local community	.469	.452	.479	.343
Parish/Pastoral council	.433	.387		
Finance council	.316	.321	.475	.451
Faculty	.438	.420	.500	.380
Parents	.490	.487	.501	.331
Students	.370	.379	.473	.309
Diocesan office	.470	.390		.304
Diocesan board	.451			.420
Parent groups (PTA)	.453	.371	.409	.398
Board develops goals	.319	.411		
Board assessment	.205		.282	.228
Evaluates in light of goals	.299	.396		

The strength of the relationship between communication and perceived effectiveness varies both with the type of board and with the object of its communication. All types of boards show significant relationships between perceived effectiveness and communication with faculty, parents, parent groups, students, and the local community. The relationship between perceived effectiveness and communication with parishes and the diocesan education office is higher for boards from elementary schools than for boards from diocesan, regional or interparish secondary schools, and not significant for boards from private secondary schools. The relationship between perceived effectiveness and communication with the diocesan school board is significant only for boards from parish elementary schools and those from diocesan, regional and interparish secondary schools.

Other important relationships between perceived effectiveness occur for boards that develop goals and evaluate themselves in the light of these goals (elementary school

boards, particularly those from interparish, regional or diocesan schools); board assessment or evaluation (particularly for private schools); and involvement in planning (particularly secondary schools), policy (private secondary schools only), budget (diocesan, regional or interparish secondary schools), and development (particularly private secondary schools).

Predictors of Perceived Board Effectiveness

A stepwise regression analysis was conducted to determine the best predictors of perceived board effectiveness. The dependent variable in each analysis was the grade assigned to the board's effectiveness and the following 11 factors served as predictors: 1) Length of time board has been in existence; 2) Number of elected and selected members; 3) Whether the business community is represented on the board; 4) Degree of board's ownership; 5) Presence of effective committees; 6) Does board develop goals for itself; 7) Does board conduct annually assessment of itself; 8) Is there prayer at meetings; 9) Frequency of board training sessions; 10) Is board member of NCEA/NABE; and 11) Communication with constituencies (a composite score).

Table 14 shows the results of the separate regression analyses for parish elementary school boards; diocesan, regional and interparish elementary school boards; diocesan, regional and interparish secondary school boards; and private and independent secondary school boards. Listwise deletion of missing data was utilized so that only boards with no missing data on any predictors were retained in the analysis. Some boards were omitted from the analysis due to missing data. For example, 288 of the 358 parish elementary schools in the data base with boards had complete data on all predictors and were included in the analysis. The analysis also included 77 of 94 diocesan, regional or interparish elementary schools with boards; 68 of 109 diocesan, regional or interparish secondary schools with boards; and 58 of 68 private and independent secondary schools with boards.

As suggested by the correlational analysis, three dominant predictors of the assigned grade emerge from the regression analysis. The degree of the board's ownership of the issues was a significant predictor in each of the four models and the most important predictor of the assigned grade for diocesan, regional and interparish secondary schools. Among boards in general, those associated with private secondary schools are seen to take the most ownership of issues. Communication with constituencies appeared as the most important predictor of the assigned grade for parish elementary schools and private secondary schools; however, it was not a significant predictor for the diocesan, regional or interparish school models. Effective committees predicted the assigned grade for all but private schools and it was the most important predictor for diocesan, regional and interparish elementary schools.

Table 14
Stepwise Regression Results With Grade Assigned to Board's Effectiveness as Criterion Variable

	Parish Elementary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Elementary	Private Independent Secondary	Diocesan Regional Interparish Secondary
Variance Explained	51.7%	49.9%	45.0%	42.6%
Significant Predictors/	Incremental Variance Explained			
Communication with Constituencies	34.2%	ns	32.5%	ns
Degree of Ownership	12.8%	10.1%	12.5%	31.4%
Effective Committees	4.7%	39.8%	ns	11.2%

Factors Preventing Board Effectiveness

What factors seem to prevent a board from being effective? Approximately 40 percent of all boards and 70 percent of boards that received a grade of "A" did not identify any factor that prevented their effectiveness. Two factors that emerged with some frequency, however, when boards did report impediments to effectiveness were lack of time and lack of training. Approximately 18 percent of all boards and 15 percent of "A" boards identified lack of time, or being too busy, as the major factor impeding their effectiveness. Lack of training and/or lack of experience was a major factor for 7 percent of all boards; however, very few boards with "A" grades listed this as a factor.

Other factors preventing board effectiveness that were identified from time to time included: lack of commitment (approximately 5 percent of all boards); lack of understanding of role; dominant personal agendas, particularly for diocesan, regional and interparish boards; lack of authority, also for diocesan, regional and interparish boards; and, pastor problems, for all boards except those from private schools.

Summary of Differences between Effective Boards and All Boards

In summary, what are the factors that distinguish effective boards from other boards? In terms of their structures, boards that are perceived as effective, that is those that received a grade of "A" for board effectiveness, are more likely than other boards to have more members, to include business people and alumni as members, and to have finance, nominating, policy, marketing, development, facility, and executive committees.

In terms of their responsibilities and activities, "A" boards are more involved than other boards with issues pertaining to budget, policy, mission and philosophy, and planning; are more likely to have goals, review or update them annually, and use them as a basis of self evaluation; receive training at least annually and train their new members; take more ownership of issues; have higher levels of contact and communication with their constituencies; and are more likely to have their progresses assessed periodically.

Finally, in terms of their accomplishments, "A" boards are more likely to have effective committees and effective meetings; list as main achievements the following: development/ fundraising (especially elementary schools); budget/ financial stability (especially diocesan, interparish and regional schools); long-range planning; and marketing/ public relations/ recruitment (especially parish elementary schools and diocesan, interparish and regional secondary schools); and plant upgrade (parish elementary schools); and are more likely to identify dedication and commitment as major factors contributing to their main achievements.

Conclusion

In conclusion, what have the results of this survey revealed to us about the progress boards are making toward attaining Sheehan's objectives? It appears that most boards are achieving these objectives well and some are achieving them very well. The data show that boards are providing an opportunity to involve the laity, particularly parents of children in Catholic schools, in advising about the ministry of Catholic school education. In addition, the evidence is compelling that boards, especially effective boards, take ownership of issues, develop and defend policy, offer financial advice, enable strategic planning, and serve as a good public relations resource. Finally, with regard to the remaining objective identified by Sheehan, although not directly assessed in this survey, boards and other governance structures that function in an appropriate manner clearly should assist a principal to achieve the the levels of spiritual, educational and managerial leadership expected of a Catholic school administrator.